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IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKE STRIDES IN MATHEMATICS

BOISE – Idaho’s high school seniors have shown gains in mathematics since 2009, according to the most recent results of the Nation’s Report Card. Despite the positive gains, the most recent results still show far too many Idaho students are graduating from high school unprepared for the rigors of college or career.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly referred to as the Nation’s Report Card, is typically administered to a sample of 4th and 8th grade students in every state every two years to measure academic progress in mathematics and reading. Idaho was one of 13 states to participate in a pilot of the 12th-grade NAEP.

Among these states, Idaho was one of just four states in which students posted higher average math scores in 2013 than they did four years ago. In 2013, the average score of Idaho high school seniors in mathematics was 156, which is higher than the average score of 153 in 2009.

“I am pleased to see Idaho’s high school seniors making gains in mathematics in recent years. I believe this is a direct result of the Idaho Math Initiative, which has worked since 2008 to provide targeted professional development to Idaho’s teachers and more opportunities to every Idaho student to ensure we raise academic achievement across all grade levels,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said. “I applaud every Idaho teacher, parent and student for this success, but it is clear we have more work to do to make sure every child graduates from high school prepared for the rigors of college and career.”

Despite the positive gains in mathematics, the data shows that just 24 percent of Idaho’s 12th grade students scored at or above proficient – or on grade level – in mathematics, according to the 2013 NAEP results.

In reading, Idaho’s high school seniors continued to outpace the nation, but they did not show significant growth over 2009. An estimated 41 percent of Idaho’s 12th grade students scored at or above proficient – or on grade level – in reading, according to the most recent results.

The results mirror what Idaho has seen on the SAT over the past two years where an estimated one in four high school juniors taking the exam have met college- and career-readiness benchmarks set by the College Board.

Idaho is working to address these challenges in several ways, including raising academic standards through the implementation of the higher, more rigorous Idaho Core Standards in mathematics and English language arts.

NAEP is currently the only assessment that can compare student achievement across multiple states, but that will change when Idaho fully transitions to the new Smarter Balanced Assessment next year. The Smarter Balanced Assessment will replace the previous ISAT to measure students against the new Common Core State Standards, which Idaho adopted in 2011, and will give Idaho a more accurate measure of how Idaho students perform academically compared to students in other states in future years.

To learn more about the Nation’s Report Card results, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>. To learn more about the Idaho Core Standards or Smarter Balanced Assessment, visit <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/ICS/>.

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